

A
REVIEW
 OF THE
STATE
 OF THE
BRITISH NATION.

Thursday, January 13. 1709.

THE last Review following the Scent of an implacable Author, pursuing his Rage against the *Scots*, has brought him down to the whole Body of *Dissenters* in *England*, and the Substance of what his Arguments import, I summ'd up in two Heads.

1. No Salvation without Baptism; of which I have spoken already.
2. No Baptism, but by an Episcopally Ordain'd Ministry.

The whole Weight of the Matter he places upon the Bishops being the Suc-

cessors of the Apostles, to whom the first Mission of our Saviour was sent, *Matt.* 28. 19. *Go ye therefore and teach all Nations, baptizing them, &c.* —

This, he says, is an exclusive Commission, and can descend to none but to those who are the Successors of the Apostles, and those to whom they shall commit it. Now suppose, to lay a Foundation for what shall be said on this Head, I should wave what Objections may lie against this Opinion — And for Argument Sake grant it as amply as it is laid down; yet it will follow, that I must ask three Questions.

I. Whether

1. Whether the *Presbyterians* are without a Succession of a Gospel Ministry, even in his Sence?
2. Whether the *Episcopal Church* can prove they have any such Succession?
3. If that Succession be not certain, what Condition their People are in, according to this Doctrine?

1. To enquire, whether the *Presbyterians* are without a Succession of Ministers? And here we must, as the Church does, go back to a *Papish* Ordination, which the Succession is carry'd thorow, and which, to justify this Succession, must be allow'd; and from this Ordination we say, our first reforming Ministers in Scotland deriv'd, as they did also in England—The Question therefore will seem to revolve here, Whether a Number of Ministers legally ordain'd have not Power to ordain other Ministers without a Bishop? And for this, among many various Instances, I refer to Bede himself, *Lib. 3. Cap. 4.*—*Anno Incarnationis Dominice Quingentesimo sexagesimo quinto, venit de Hibernia Presbyter & Abbas, Habitu & Vita insignis, Nomine Columban Britannium, predicaturum Verbum Dei Provinciis Septentrionalium Pictorum.* “In the Year 565, one “Columba an Abbot and Presbyter came “from Ireland, being a Man Eminent “for Holiness of Life, and preach'd “the Gospel to the Northern Provinces “of the Picts—After this we see the Effect of his Ministry; *Venit autem in Britanniam Columban, regnante Pictis Briddo Rege potentissimo, nono Anno Regni ejus Gentemq; illam Verbo & Exemplo ad Fidem.*

Christi convertit. Here it appears, “He “converted those People to the Faith “of Christ by his Doctrine and Example. Upon this he built a Monastery, *Unde & Prefatam Insulam ab eis in Possessionem Monasterii faciendi accepit. Fecerat autem priusquam Britanniam veniret, Monasterium nobile in Hibernia, quod à Copia Roborum Dearmach cognominatur.* “He had also before he came to Britain, built a Monastery in Ireland, “call'd Dearmagl.—*Ex quo utroq; Monasterio, plurima exinde Monasteria per Discipulos ejus.* “From which two Monasteries, several others were erected “by his Disciples.

Now this Columba had Disciples, who erected Monasteries, and who ruling in those Monasteries were certainly regular, and yet they were only his Disciples, which, I think, will include being ordain'd by him, and yet he was no Bishop. Nay after this, when there were Bishops, they were inferior to them, the Bishops themselves were subject to the Abbots who succeeded him, a shrewd Sign what a Bishop was in those Days, see the same Author. *Habere autem solet ipsa Insula Rectorem semper Abbatem Presbyterum, cujus Furi & omnis Provincia, & ipsi etiam Episcopi, debeant esse subiecti, juxta Exemplum primi Doctoris illius, qui non Episcopus, sed Presbyter extitit & Monachus.*—“This “Island always had a Rector, an Abbot and a Presbyter, to whom all the “Province, and even the Bishops themselves, ought to subject themselves, “according to the Example of the first “Institutor or Teacher, who was not “a Bishop, but continued a Presbyter “and a Monk.

Thus

Thus far from *Bede*; and the Learned Sir *James Dalrymple* in his Collections quotes this very Place in proving, that the *Scots Church* kept it self from the Errors of Popery, and maintain'd its Primitive Purity for several Centuries, after the rest of the World was over-run with it, even to the eighth Century—If then the Right of Ordaining might remain in Ministers Episcopally ordain'd, tho' not Bishops themselves, then I say, the *Scots Presbyterian Ministers* are as legally ordain'd, as their *Episcopal Ministers* are ordain'd; since when they reform'd immediately from Popery, their first Ministers were Episcopally ordain'd, and they have been as regular in conveying a Succession, as any Church in the World.

2. Our next Enquiry is, whether the *Episcopal Church* can prove any regular Succession of Priesthood from the first Mission, i. e. from the Apostles; and this being their Affirmative, I demand the Proof of our Author, or else he does nothing; for if the Right lies only in the first Mission, if a Succession from that Mission be not made clear, the Right is not clear; and then by his own Rule the Baptism of their Ministers is doubtful, which he says, we ought to avoid.

Now, I am first instructed, that on the baptizing my Infant Child, depends absolutely its Salvation. (*Horrid Absurdity!*) To this another as gross is added, that it depends also upon the Legality of the Administration, that is, by his own Explication, the due Qualification of the Person officiating—Well, This Qualification is purely, that he be appointed to do it, BY ONE, who

was appointed BY ONE, who was appointed BY ONE, who was appointed BY ONE, and so back TO ONE, who was appointed by these very Apostles, who were appointed by our Saviour in those very Words, GO and Baptize, for no other Person can do it effectually.

Now to save him the Labour of finding out One to begin at; I'll take St. Peter, and I'll grant all that Power to be given to St. Peter that can be ask'd. —I'll grant, the Bishops of Rome, Successors to St. Peter, carry'd on the Descent of his *Episcopal Power*.

But to clear up my Doubt as a Parent, when my Child comes to be baptiz'd, I must ask two Questions. 1. Is the Descent of the Bishops of Rome clear, and has there been no Interruption, but that we are sure this Bishop of Rome is legally descended? And tho' I do not pretend to a great Deal of Knowledge in Church-History, I am mistaken, if the Succession from St. Peter is not left doubtful, before four Bishops had rul'd the Church after him.

2. There was a Time, when a great Schism happening in the Roman Church, partly upon this very Account; There were several Pretenders to the Power of the Chair, and the Authority of St. Peter, and the Rival Popes setting up one against another; one said, *Lo here*, another *Lo there*; one said, I am of Paul, another I am of Apollo; one said, *Lo here at Rome*, another *Lo there at Avignon*; and both these canoniz'd Saints, consecrated Bishops, and they again ordain'd Priests, &c. Now the Bishops, thus consecrated by both, could not be both Canonical and Regular, one Side must